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STRENGTHENING OF SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 50/75 of 12 December 1996, the General Assembly encouraged all States of the Mediterranean region to favour the necessary conditions for strengthening the confidence-building measures among them by promoting genuine openness and transparency on all military matters, by participating, inter alia, in the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures and by providing accurate data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. It also invited those States to address problems and threats posed to the region, such as terrorism, international crime and illicit arms transfers, as well as illegal drug production, consumption and trafficking, through various forms of cooperation. It commended the efforts of the Mediterranean countries in meeting common challenges through coordinated overall responses, based on a spirit of multilateral partnership, towards the general objective of turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchange and cooperation, guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on means to strengthen security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region.

2. With a view to facilitating the preparation of such a report, the Secretary-General addressed notes verbales to all Member States, requesting their views on the matter.

3. As at 25 July 1996, five Governments have replied to the notes verbales of the Secretary-General and their responses are reproduced in section II below. Any replies or notifications received subsequently will be published as addenda to the present report.

II. REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

ECUADOR

[Original: Spanish]

[7 June 1996]

1. Although Ecuador is not part of the Mediterranean region, it endorses the text of General Assembly resolution 50/75 and hopes that all States that are currently involved in conflicts will reach a lasting peace on the basis of respect for the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular those that refer to abstention from the use of force or the threat of use of force in international relations and to non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

2. Ecuador also considers that it is important to deal with international terrorism, international crime and illicit arms trafficking in the region, and will cooperate with the Organization in every way possible to combat these scourges and establish a zone of peace and security in the Mediterranean region.

ITALY (on behalf of the European Union)

[Original: English]

[29 June 1996]

1. The European Union recalls its joint reply set forth in documents A/48/51/Add.1, A/48/514/Add.1, A/49/333 and A/50/300 and reiterates the main elements set forth therein and at the same time would like to make some additional points.

2. The European Union is convinced that the multiple security and cooperation challenges existing in the Mediterranean region require a multidisciplinary, global and coordinated approach that would at the same time permit each specific issue to be dealt with on an individual basis.

3. The European Union considers that in order to set up an area for exchange, cooperation and dialogue in the Mediterranean where peace, stability and prosperity are guaranteed, it is necessary to consolidate democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and to achieve balanced and sustained socio-economic development and a broader understanding between the different cultures. The European Union is of the view that these objectives are attainable through a strengthened political dialogue to be held on a regular basis, through the development of financial and economic cooperation and by granting a more important role to the social, human and cultural dimensions of this dialogue.

4. The European Union is convinced that if the Mediterranean basin is to become an area for dialogue, exchanges and cooperation where peace, stability and the well-being of its peoples are guaranteed, it behooves the European Union and its Mediterranean partners to act jointly. With this objective in view and following the orientations of the European Councils of Lisbon (June 1992), Corfu (June 1994), Essen (December 1994) and Cannes (June 1995), the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference of Barcelona was held on 27 and 28 November 1995 with the participation of the European Union and the Mediterranean States associated institutionally with it. The aim of the Conference was to set the pillars for a new global scheme of relations between the European Union and its Mediterranean partners that would take into account the political and security questions, the economic aspects and the human and social issues present in the Mediterranean region. The Conference ended with the signature of the Barcelona Declaration, which contains the main principles of the future Euro-Mediterranean partnership, and of its work programme.

5. The Conference has not endeavoured to be a specific forum to solve concrete conflicts or to replace any other initiative in the region in favour of peace, stability and development. Thus, it will not interfere with ongoing regional initiatives like the Middle East peace process but will firmly support it. The Euro-Mediterranean Conference will thus be the starting-point of a process for cooperation between Mediterranean riparian States. In its Declaration, the Conference reaffirmed a number of common principles in matters of internal (rule of law, human rights) and external (basic principles for good-neighbourly relations) stability of the participating States. In particular, the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean pact, an initiative launched at the Conference, should

be conducive to the implementation of these principles, through the adoption on a voluntary basis of an evolutionary set of measures of confidence-building aimed at the consolidation of an area of peace and stability in the Mediterranean.

6. The Barcelona Conference clearly stated its objectives and set up its architecture for a lasting cooperative dialogue, designing its follow-up as an open process which must be developed. Therefore, it established concrete mechanisms by means of which the continuous action-oriented dialogue may take place, identifying actions and providing resources enabling objectives to be achieved. In this respect the first meeting of senior officials was held at Brussels on 26 and 27 March 1996 and the first meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona process took place on 16 and 17 April 1996.

7. As stated in the Barcelona Declaration, peace, stability and security constitute common goals shared by all the States in the region. The European Union reiterates its support to the continuing efforts by Mediterranean countries to contribute actively to the elimination of all causes of tension in the region and to the promotion of just and lasting solutions to the persistent problems of the region through peaceful means, thus ensuring the withdrawal of foreign forces of occupation and respecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries of the Mediterranean and the right of peoples to self-determination, and therefore calls for full adherence to the principles of non-interference, non-intervention, non-use of force or threat of use of force and the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, in accordance with the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

8. Promotion of security and support to disarmament processes are instrumental to the establishment of an area of dialogue, exchanges and cooperation in the Mediterranean basin. In the security field, among other initiatives, the Western European Union has since 1992 provided a framework for dialogue with some southern riparian States. This dialogue responds to a global concept of security and pursues the attainment of a more intense mutual knowledge and understanding, thus reducing the possibility of false perceptions.

9. On the other side, the European Union has also encouraged other initiatives to foster dialogue and cooperation between both shores of the Mediterranean, not only within the framework of the Union's foreign policy but also in other forums and organizations in which members of the Union participate. In the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), preliminary contacts with some southern riparian States have begun with a view to contributing to a better climate of understanding and, consequently, to regional stability. In the context of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Budapest Summit of December 1994 and the Budapest Ministerial Meeting of December 1995 opened up new possibilities for dialogue with the Mediterranean partners on issues that could affect the region as a whole, and for profiting from the experience achieved in the OSCE framework and foster a more open dialogue in the region.

10. In the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, the European Union views as the main goal in the short term the timely conclusion of a universal,

internationally and effectively verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty, establishing a true zero-yield option. There is no doubt that the treaty will contribute to fostering security and stability not only globally but also in the Mediterranean region. The European Union urges all States concerned to speed up negotiations so that they may be concluded by this summer. In the same spirit, the European Union calls upon all States in the region to honour the commitments assumed by them as signatories to agreements on arms control as well as on disarmament and non-proliferation, and invites all regional Mediterranean States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This invitation also extends to the field of chemical weapons, so that the chemical weapons Convention may receive as early as possible the number of new ratifications required for its entry into force. Similarly, the European Union supports the work being carried out to establish a verification protocol for the Biological Weapons Convention and encourages all the Mediterranean regional States to comply with the confidence measures agreed at the Third Review Conference of the Treaty. At the same time the European Union also welcomes the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned, as an instrument for global and regional peace and stability. In this spirit the European Union firmly supports the establishment of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East.

11. The European Union is convinced that a greater degree of transparency in military issues constitutes an instrument to enhance stability from both a global and a regional point of view. In this respect the European Union views the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as a most useful instrument for the Mediterranean region. The European Union therefore urges all States in the area to send the pertinent data on transfers of conventional weapons to the United Nations Register, including nil reports, which are an important contribution to the success of the Register, and also to extend this information to include military holdings and procurement through national production and relevant policies, as laid down in paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 46/36 of 9 December 1991. The European Union also urges all regional Mediterranean States to participate in the United Nations system for standardized reporting of military expenditures. The aforementioned mechanisms should serve the purpose of impeding an excessive and destabilizing accumulation of conventional weapons in the region.

QATAR

[Original: Arabic]

[15 July 1996]

1. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

The Israeli nuclear capability and the leakage of radiation from nuclear waste at the Dimona reactor in the Negev desert pose a threat to the security and safety of the Mediterranean region. Israel's refusal to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and place its nuclear installations

under international safeguards likewise threatens international peace and security.

We therefore urge all Mediterranean countries to bring pressure to bear on Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and place its nuclear installations under the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and to adopt a common position in the Security Council on the transformation of the Middle East region into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, foremost among which are nuclear weapons.

2. Arms transfers

The dangers that arise because of the unrestricted spread of conventional weapons and related missile-delivery systems became clear in the invasion of Kuwait. We therefore support the principle of openness and transparency for the States of the Mediterranean basin with respect to the transfer of conventional weapons and related military technology. We also support the establishment of a United Nations register of arms transfers. We urge all the States of the Mediterranean region: to be more candid with regard to military holdings and arms sales; to place arms exports under strict controls; to curb exports of weapons that undermine stability and of high-technology weapons; to expand the Missile Technology Control Regime; to prevent the transfer to the Gulf States of weapons that might exacerbate conflict, increase tension or undermine security; and to prevent the transfer of arms in violation of internationally agreed embargoes or that might be used for purposes other than those of legitimate self-defence and security, might encourage terrorism, might be used to interfere in the internal affairs of States or might destroy the economies of the receiving States.

3. Economic cooperation

The promotion of cooperation among the countries of the Mediterranean has the aim of encouraging the economic and social development of all the peoples of the region, and it will contribute greatly to the achievement of stability, peace and security in the region.

4. Conflict resolution

In view of the emergence in the Mediterranean region, and particularly in the former Yugoslavia, of national, ethnic and religious animosities that pose a threat to security, peace and stability in the region, it is firmly believed that significant priority must be accorded to the strengthening of security and cooperation mechanisms and of confidence-building measures among the countries of the Mediterranean in order to prevent conflicts and resolve ongoing disputes.

5. International instruments

The Mediterranean countries must comply with international agreements and respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

[Original: Russian]

[18 July 1996]

1. The situation in the Mediterranean is marked by the emergence of conflicting trends. The major changes in the world, which have eliminated confrontation between blocs, have already had an impact on the situation in the Mediterranean region, where the outlines of a peaceful future are beginning to take shape: the Middle East peace process is proceeding, although with considerable difficulty; the move towards peace in the Balkans is continuing; and there is a growing understanding of the importance of establishing regional cooperation for economic growth and rescuing the environment of the Mediterranean basin.

2. However, there remain other disquieting trends which are tending to destabilize the situation. Foremost among these are the widening disparity in the levels of socio-economic development on the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, the threat of the regional proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the danger posed by extremism in the region. A number of unresolved regional conflicts including the problem of Cyprus, the disagreement between Greece and Turkey and the recent sharp deterioration in the situation in Lebanon are matters of serious concern.

3. The Russian Federation is firmly committed to strengthening the constructive role of the United Nations in resolving political, economic and environmental problems in the region. In establishing multilateral collaboration among the Mediterranean States, it is essential to support and encourage intraregional dialogue on the problems of stability, security and cooperation in the Mediterranean.

4. In present circumstances, it is important not to allow the positive trends in the region to be eroded; rather they must be strengthened and developed so as to ensure their all-round impact on the regional situation. Above all, it is essential to preserve the achievements of the Middle East peace process and to proceed with it without artificial interruptions. It is also essential to strengthen the leading role of the United Nations in resolving the problem of Cyprus.

5. The most serious attention should be given to the problem of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Mediterranean. We attach the utmost importance to the study of the prerequisites for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and of the means of promoting that end. The necessary research might be carried out by the experts of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

6. The nature and scale of the threat to international security in the region make it essential not only to establish a dialogue among the Mediterranean States themselves but also to involve countries bordering on the region in that process. The transformation of the region into a zone of peace, stability and cooperation must be made an integral part of an international partnership on a

basis of equality within the framework of the "Greater Mediterranean" and of a system of cooperation between the States of the Mediterranean and Black Sea basins and the Middle East.

7. A programme should be devised to coordinate action taken by United Nations bodies to address the problems of the region with the aim of, inter alia, improving environmental conditions in the Black Sea and Mediterranean basins.

8. The Russian Federation welcomes the active involvement of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in fostering the development of Mediterranean economic cooperation. We believe that it makes sense to entrust ECE with the preparation in 1996 of a report on the coordination of the activities undertaken in the Mediterranean region by United Nations bodies concerned with social and economic matters in order to promote the concept of sustainable development.

9. In our view, the establishment of economic cooperation among the countries of the Black Sea and Mediterranean basins, principally in the framework of infrastructure projects in the fields of energy, transport and telecommunications, is becoming an increasingly urgent matter. The Russian Federation considers it essential to facilitate the development of such cooperation. In that context there is a pressing need to establish links between the ECE secretariat and the secretariat of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation in order to develop and support joint projects in those areas.

10. In that connection, another important and promising initiative, in our view, is the establishment of collaboration on economic and environmental projects in the framework of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the European Union's Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED).

11. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has a potentially important contribution to make to strengthening security in the "Greater Mediterranean". It is important to support efforts to establish cooperation between the Mediterranean States and OSCE and to use the experience accumulated by that organization with regard to measures to promote confidence and transparency in the military sphere.

UKRAINE

[Original: Russian]

[22 July 1996]

1. The strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region is one of the priority aims of Ukraine's foreign policy, given its close economic and cultural ties and transport links with the countries of the Mediterranean.

2. Ukraine is prepared to cooperate in the effort to combat terrorism, international organized crime, illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, explosives, poisonous substances and radioactive

materials, and illegal transborder movements of persons, cargoes, goods and valuables; in the effort to suppress crimes against persons and government property, and criminal offences in the economic, financial and banking spheres; and in exchanges of convicted persons. The practical steps which Ukraine has already taken towards this end include the signing of an agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of Turkey on cooperation to fight crime (15 April 1994) and an agreement between the ministries of the interior of Ukraine and Italy to combat illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and organized crime (27 May 1993).

3. Ukraine values highly the contribution of the countries of the Mediterranean region in the process aimed at banning chemical and biological weapons and preventing nuclear proliferation and calls upon States which have not yet acceded to the regime prohibiting weapons of mass destruction to do so at the earliest possible date.

4. Ukraine welcomes the holding of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona, Spain, on 27 and 28 November 1995 and the adoption by the Conference of the Barcelona Declaration and work programme.